

SUBJECT: Testimony in Support of HB-6355, An Act Concerning Risk Protection Orders

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, ranking members Kissel and Fishbein and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee.

My Name is Ruth M Feldman, a Madison, CT resident and a member of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. I am writing to tell you that I strongly support modernizing our current red flag law as outlined in the current amendments before you. And here's why.

Two years ago, my 92 year-old father's health began to rapidly decline. And though he a resident in an assisted living facility, and not completely "alone," he became depressed. One day he looked at me and asked for my "help;" he said he didn't "want to be here anymore." During a subsequent hospitalization, a doctor asked him if he thought about taking his own life and he answered "yes," but didn't know how to do it. To this day, I am convinced that had he known a fellow resident possessed a gun and because many residents did not lock their individual apartment doors, given his declining mental state, the possibility that my father could have used a weapon to take his own life is something that haunts me to this day.

And this is why I support HB-6355 as the most notable change to the current law is to allow family and household members to directly petition the court to issue an **Extreme Risk Protection Order ("ERPO")**. Under current law, only law enforcement officials can do this, and only after conducting an independent investigation. And in those communities in which residents may not feel comfortable approaching the police, this puts lives at risk.

We recognize that Connecticut was the first state in the nation to pass an Extreme Risk Protection Order law in 1999; an incredible feat and one which served as a model for many other states. It offers a means of last resort, with due process protections, to temporarily remove firearms from individuals judged to be at risk of imminent harm to themselves or others. And statistically it has been shown to prevent firearm suicide and stop mass shootings.

But now it is time to strengthen that law so that it works harder to prevent gun violence.

Please support HB-6335.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best,

Ruth M Feldman  
Madison, CT